

Subrecipient/Applicant eCivis Portal Training Responses
to Questions from Training Sessions

Effective as of July 17, 2023

*Includes responses to questions from all previous training sessions

Included are questions and answers with general applicability. Several participants had specific questions which were addressed directly offline.

1. Question:

Is OSP (Ocean State Procures) used to search for subaward funding opportunities?

Answer:

No, going forward, OSP is not used to search for subaward funding opportunities. Subaward funding opportunities are now posted on the [RI Funding Opportunity website](#)

Each funding opportunity has an “Apply” button which opens the eCivis Portal to begin an application.

You can go directly to the [eCivis Portal](#) to return to an open application, accept and manage awards.

* **NOTE:** Funding opportunities for contracts (goods & services) on federal funds will continue to follow the procurement process and be [posted here](#)

2. Question:

Can multiple people in one organization create a login, or should we have one point person create a login? Will profiles connect if multiple from the same organization?

Answer:

Multiple people can create a login in eCivis. But only the person in your organization/entity that starts an application can view/edit that application in the eCivis Portal. That person can only add additional users after an award has been finalized. Please determine internally the point person that will complete each application and facilitate the award acceptance process. To collaborate internally, print, screenshare or PDF the application and award.

If you apply to multiple grant programs, a different person may submit each application.

3. Question:

Will awards applied for under the old system (on paper) but awarded in this fiscal year be accessible in GMS?

Answer:

It depends on the agency and the end date of the award. Awards that have end dates after 6/30/24 will be transitioned into the GMS. Existing, in-flight awards that end sooner may not be transitioned into the system.

4. Question:

If documents in a NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) are updated mid-application period, will there be a note saying it's been updated or the date it was uploaded? Otherwise, if we download a guidance document early in the period, how will we know it's the most up to date?

Answer:

Agencies have been advised to highlight any changes after initial posting, using the narrative boxes on the corresponding tab. If attachments to the solicitation are updated, such updates should be disclosed in the notes on the right side of the Files tab. It is the applicant's responsibility to review the solicitation for any updates.

5. Question:

When signing in to eCivis, what's the difference between the "Portal Log In" and "Grants Network Log In"?

Answer:

Grants Network Log in is for state agency users (or others with a paid eCivis account). Applicants should use "Portal Login"

6. Question:

Will there be a "Help Desk" or user support number available to call for assistance while online?

Answer:

Yes! The Help Desk can be contacted by using the [GMS User Support Form](#) for all technical issues or at DOA.Grants@doa.ri.gov for additional questions related to training

Please keep in mind we are only able to answer questions about access/login issues for the Portal, technical issues with the Portal, RI Grant policy related questions, GMS resources (like trainings) or the budget not calculating correctly. Any grant specific questions about the application contents or process should be sent directly to the grantor contact listed on the funding opportunity page.

7. Question:

Is there an eCivis/GMS user manual available?

Answer:

Extensive information, including user guides and webinars, is posted on our website by [clicking here](#)

8. Question:

This may be in the initial set up of the organization, will all banking information to receive funds have to be done at each submission or will it be in the masterfile?

Answer:

Banking information is not added or edited through GMS. Instructions on adding/editing ACH information is available through Ocean State Procures (OSP), to ensure tight controls on banking info.

9. Question:

Does the system alert you when your annual registration is due?

Answer:

Yes, the system will send a notification. Annual Org Registration status will also be posted on the Grants Management website, *updated weekly*. Question:

Are grants listed both on the OSP bidding page and the RI Funding Opportunity page?

Answer:

As state agencies adopt GMS over the next several months, grants listings will be on the Funding Opportunities Page, not on OSP.

10. Question:

For the annual registration process, is there a requirement to complete a document for each authorized user in eCivis and submit applications? Is there a way to submit additional authorized users to submit applications after the annual registration is completed?

Answer:

No, only one Org Registration is needed per organization each year. For more information, please refer to Question #2 above.

11. Question:

Our Annual Organization profile still shows "Peer Review". When will that be complete?

Answer:

Your annual org registration will remain in review, so multiple agencies can access it, if applicable. The Grants Management Office will work with our vendor to determine feasibility of making this change.

12. Question:

Do I need to use a unique email for each application if I am completing the solicitation for multiple organizations?

Answer:

Please refer to the ["Tips for Consultants assisting applicants"](#) if you are applying on behalf of multiple organizations.

13. Question:

Do you foresee an easier way to share access to the application?

Answer:

No, only one user has access to an application. We recommend screensharing, or printing/pdf the budget and application narrative to collaborate internally on an application.

14. Question:

Is there any way to upload an Excel budget rather than entering each line item through the portal?

Answer:

The application budget structure is determined by the state agency. Please contact the Program Manager/Contact listed in the solicitation. Entering your budget directly into the system will allow you to report against it in the post-award phase.

15. Question:

Is there a hard date for moving over to the new system?

Answer:

We are currently in a transition state, and we will be moving all new and open and active awards into the GMS by June 30, 2023.

16. Question:

Can multiple individuals at the organization view all the award applications, and approved for the organization or is this access only for the Authorized Representative for the organization?

Answer:

Please refer to Question #2 for more information

17. Question:

What is the difference between portal login and grants network login?

Answer:

The grants network button is for folks with paid accounts, like our state agency users. Applicants and subrecipients should use the eCivis "Portal Login" button at login. Portal is free for users

18. Question:

Does the Subaward Agreement eliminate the need to wait for an award letter and Purchase Order?

Answer:

You will get the subaward agreement via the eCivis Portal. Once that is fully executed, you can proceed, unless the Performance Period start date is later. A tentative award letter is NOT an authorization to proceed. You will need a fully executed subaward agreement.

19. Question:

Will applicants get a link to the RI Funding Opportunity site? Where do we find that address?

Answer:

Extensive resources for applicants/subrecipients including the FAQ for this training session and side deck are posted on our website: [click here](#)

20. Question:

Can we change staff names if our entity has already registered for the Portal?

Answer:

Multiple staff people can register in the system. The limitation is that only the person that submits an application can view that application directly in the Portal. If your org applies for multiple grant programs, different people can apply to each program.

21. Question:

Will the state still be using delegated authority when deemed appropriate?

Answer:

For subawards only – the GMS replaces delegated authority, State Agencies with delegated authority will continue to have that ability related to contracts etc.

22. Question:

Does each colleague in an entity create their own Portal log in or create users under the company's profile?

Answer:

Please refer to Question #2 for more information

There are user certification forms to include with an application by [clicking here](#)

23. Question:

Will the new subaward process impact our MPA?

Answer:

If you are on an MPA with the state this process should not impact you. If you have a unique circumstance, please feel free to follow up with us by email doa.grants@doa.ri.gov.

24. Question:

Is it possible to get a company-wide view of all applications submitted for our entity?

Answer:

You can add the same staff person(s) to all awards, and that person will be able to view all **awards**. To get information on all **applications**, you would have to reach out to us via the [User Support Form](#)

25. Question:

Will the award notification go to all users on the Portal application or only the main org account?

Answer:

The award notification via the system will only go to the email of the person that applied.

26. Question:

Once an award is accepted by the company, can multiple staff members access and see the award?

Answer:

Please refer to Question #2 for more information

Use the "Manage Project Team" button to add colleagues to your award.

27. Question:

Do subrecipients directly enter invoices into the Portal, or do you upload invoices as documents and enter the information manually?

Invoices/payment requests can be submitted to your grantor agency through the eCivis portal using the "Submit Financial Report" functionality. Financial reports allow you to report your expenditures in the interactive budget template, as well as upload supporting documentation and include a narrative.

28. Question:

Is this only for subaward agreements? Will there be a similar process for requesting a budget change to a contract?

Answer:

Contracts on federal funds will continue using the existing process, The federal government has different criteria for subawards vs contracts which is why subawards will be in the system and contracts will continue through current procurement process. If you aren't sure if you are acting as a contractor or subrecipient for a specific program, ask the state agency.

29. Question:

If we are adding team members to the Portal, do they need to be registered separately?

Answer:

Please refer to Question #2 for more information

30. Question:

Our entity has a different UEI for each division. Do we have to register all UEIs in GMS?

Answer:

When you apply for funds, enter the applicable UEI for the division. In your Annual Organization Registration, enter your primary UEI.

31. Question:

Will payments still go through the RIPAY website?

Answer:

For subawards you receive through the portal, you will request payments via the eCivis Portal. Payments will continue be made via the state financial system, RIFANS. You will be able to check the status in the Portal, and in RIPAY.

32. Question:

What's the difference between a subaward versus a contract?

Answer:

A **subrecipient** receives federal funds from a non-federal entity to carry out part of a federal program. The legal agreement between the two parties creates a federal assistance relationship commonly known as a **subaward**. A **Contractor** is an entity (dealer, distributor, merchant, or other seller) who has a legal agreement with a non-federal entity to provide goods and services needed to carry out the program under a federal award. Check with the state agency if you have questions about an existing agreement.

33. Question:

When does the Annual Organization Registration (AOR) have to be completed?

Answer:

If your entity is selected for an award, then you must register right away. Without a current GMS registration, your entity cannot receive funds or sign a subaward agreement.

If your entity frequently receives assistance, register early to prevent delays in receiving assistance. Update your registration every 12 months. If you are a new applicant for state grant funds, you may register your entity anytime. Without a current GMS registration, your entity cannot receive funds or sign a subaward agreement.

34. Question:

I tried to obtain a UEI and was asked to provide a credit card to pay a registration fee at SAM.gov. Do I have to do this every year?

Answer:

There is NO COST to get a UEI at SAM.gov. There are scammers that contact current UEI administrators offering registration for a fee. Avoid these scams by visiting the federal government's official site at <https://sam.gov/content/home> and clicking on the right-hand side. You only need to obtain a UEI one time, but you may be required to update it annually.

There is no charge for getting a UEI, registering in Ocean State Procures, or registering in the eCivis Portal.

35. Question:

We have an offline application under review. It's between grant submission and actual approval to start - so the application was not submitted in this portal. Will we still get the email to accept and manage funds through this portal?

Answer:

It depends on the agency. They may opt to initiate the awards in the system, or they may keep the award cycle offline. If the agency opts to initiate the award in GMS, you will get an email invitation. After receiving the email, you would go through the award acceptance process in GMS, but you will NOT need to re-apply. Check with your program contact(s) for any specific information for your subaward.

36. Question:

What will subrecipients need to do in order to manage existing subawards that were in-flight before the GMS was implemented?

Answer:

In most cases, nothing. Your existing award will continue to be managed as it is now. Some longer-term subawards may be migrated into the system later this year. Newly issued subawards going forward will be managed through this system.

37. Question:

Would you need to fill a grant application in eCivis prior to getting a direct state agency award or would the application process be different?

Answer:

Depending on the program, the agency may ask for some preliminary information in order to issue a direct award.

The direct award process skips the application stage. Instead, the organization's representative must accept an email invite in order for the agency to create the award package. After that, the process of accepting an award and managing an award is the same as for a competitive subaward.

38. Question:

Can you create an approval chain for financial report draw downs where one of two employees can submit a request for draw down and then one of two managers can approve the request for draw down?

Answer:

As long as both employees are added to the award, either one can submit a draw down request. On the subrecipient side, there is not approval workflow functionality.

39. Question:

Are all State agencies moving to GMS on July 1, 2023?

Answer:

All agencies except RI DOT and the State Colleges have been trained on the new system and are beginning to issue new subawards in the system. We expect this will be a transition through 2023. Some specific programs managed by RIDE will continue to use their existing process due to specific program requirements

40. Question:

When should we start to submit reports through the Portal rather than our existing methods?

Answer:

Please follow guidance from the agency. Generally, subawards issued via GMS should be reported in GMS, either by directly keying in information, or by uploading attachments the agency provided to you.

41. Question:

In a situation where a municipality applies for funding in eCivis on behalf of a local non-profit and it is awarded: Can the municipality 'add a user' from the non-profit and have them directly report into the system? Or can only municipal representatives do that?

Will the municipality or the non-profit be required to report, seek reimbursement in this new system?

Answer:

A subrecipient may only add users that represent the subrecipient entity and are authorized to enter/submit data on behalf of the subrecipient entity. Subrecipients may not add eCivis users from sub-subrecipients.

Only direct subrecipients of a state agency (entities that directly sign an agreement with the state agency) will be using this system.

42. Question:

When do I use this eCivis system, and when do I use a different system?

Answer:

Applications: Use the eCivis system to apply for Funding Opportunities listed on [RI Grant Funding Opportunities](#), or sent directly to your organization by a state agency with a URL beginning with “gn.ecivis.com.”

Subaward Management: Only use the eCivis system for subawards you have received through eCivis. When a state agency issues a subaward via eCivis, the subrecipient will then use eCivis to report progress, request reimbursement, request amendments (if applicable), respond to monitoring events, initiate closeout, etc.

43. Question:

Is there a mailing list that we can register for to receive information about opportunities?

Answer:

Yes! If you would like to sign-up for the *Rhode Island State Funding Opportunities Weekly Email Digest*, to receive an up-to-date list of publicly available funding opportunities offered through State Agencies, [Click Here](#).

44. Question:

Do we have the capability of adding budget categories when creating our budget?

Answer:

State Agencies set the budget categories for the particular grant, so you are not able to make changes to the categories, but you can make changes to the line items under the categories. Some programs have unique budget templates with different categories set by the state agency (often based on federal reporting requirements)

45. Question:

If we are creating two separate applications for the same funding opportunity, will the system allow us to create and work on two applications simultaneously?

Answer:

The grantor agency selects ahead of time if they will allow multiple applications from the same user. If multiple applications from one user is permitted, the two applications can be worked on simultaneously.

46. Question:

Who uses the Portal?

Answer:

The Portal is used by all state agencies (with a few exceptions) for grant programs that involve federal funds. eCivis Portal will be used by applicants and subrecipients from the time of application submission, through award closeout.

47. Question:

When can you begin requesting payments?

Answer:

You may begin requesting payments once your award is in the “awarded” stage for subawards issues through the Grants Management System (eCivis)

48. Question:

Are Commerce RI and other quasi-style state agencies using eCivis?

Answer:

No, only State Agencies are currently using eCivis